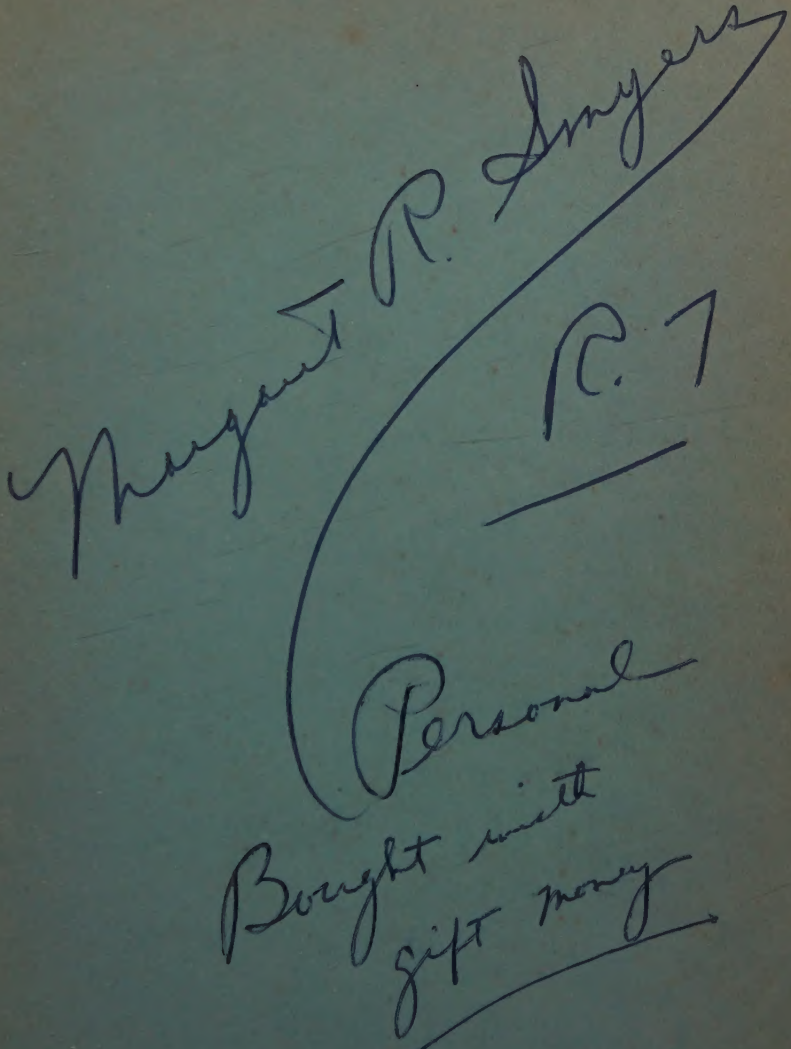
POEMS FOR PETER

LYSBETH BOYD BORIE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Poems for Peter

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By

Lysbeth Boyd Borie

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Lisl Hummel

J. B. Lippincott Company

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J. B. Lippincott Company

Printed in the
United States of America

TWELFTH IMPRESSION

To

Grandmother Boyd

Whom Peter Prefers to Call

"Gagie"

We Lovingly Dedicate

Our Little Book

The author wishes to take this opportunity to thank the *Forum* and the *Junior League Magazine* for permission to use the poems which appeared on their pages.

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Poems for Peter

Little Clean Boy

When I am clean
I'm "Darling Petey"
No one is neater
Or sweeter
Than me.

When I am dirty
I'm "Henry Peter"
And sometimes
"Henry Peter
Borie"!

Too Salty

I hate
To swallow
Ocean
And
It's all
God's fault
'Cause
He could have
Put in
Sugar
But
He went
And put in
Salt.

"Sorry, Simon!"

Simon sprays caterpillars
Out of the trees,
And Simon shoos blackbirds
Out of the peas.

Simon says the worst pest
Of any that he knows
Is a little freckled fellow
With a turned up nose.

If I'm ever in his garden
I shouldn't be there,
If I'm looking at his goldfish
It's wrong somewhere.

If I'm digging any place at all
He stops by to say,
"Sorry, this is not the place
For little boys to play."

There's not one single corner
As far as I can see,
That isn't just the very place
I oughtn't most to be.

O,—I hope I get to Heaven
Before Simon comes through,
Then I'll just say "Sorry, Simon,
This is not the place for you!"

Playing 'Possum

I've never
Seen a
'Possum
But
They must be
Lots of
Fun
If
They're half as
Nice to play
With
As to play
As though
I'm
One.

Crusts

Now why should Daddy grow so tall
Who never eats his crusts at all,
And why should Uncle Laurie be
Almost as very short as me
When he eats up the blackest crust
Without a person saying "must"?

I think there must be something wrong
About crusts make boys big and strong,
'Cause why should Daddy grow so tall
And Uncle Laurie stay so small?
So, anyhow, I think I'll just
Stay short and give up eating crust.

Greaty-Great Grannie

My Greaty-great Grannie is terribly small
And she smells just like a sachet.
She twinkles and she winkles
And she's full of funny wrinkles
But she always has a pretzel
tucked away!

My Greaty-great Grannie is terribly old.
I guess she's as old as can be.
She teases and she squeezes
And she sneezes funny sneezes
But she always has a pretzel
just for me!

"Mummy"

When I wake up in the night,
With blackness everywhere,
I just can't help calling,
"Mummy, are you there?"

Just can't help pretending
That I have cold feet,
That I'm thirsty or I found
Breadcrumbs on my sheet.

(Mummy, are you there?)

Can't help calling till she comes,
With her hair all down,
In the softest, slimsiest
Sort of nightie gown.

(Mummy, are you there?)

Then we rock and whisper
And Mummy sings a tune
Very low and all about
Fairies in the moon.

When I wake up in the night,
With blackness everywhere,
I just can't help calling,
"Mummy, are you there?"

Slipping Around

I have a brand new tub,
Not the old rubber one,
And every day I count
On having lots of fun.

If I sit on the soap
I can slip all around—
It is so big and deep
You would think I'd drown.

Nurse throws in a duck,
"There, play with your friend!"
But when I try to catch him
He is in the other end.

Now Nurse gets very cross
'Cause she doesn't seem to see
That I can't help slipping
If the tub is slippery!

Soon

"In a minute"
Means
"Tomorrow"
And "tomorrow"
Means
"Someday"
And "I'll do it
When I've finished"
Is the farthest
Away.
I don't trust
A grown-up's
Promise
But
I'm often fooled
On "soon"
'Cause sometimes
It means by
Summer
And sometimes
By
Afternoon.

Only Just Me

I wouldn't mind
Measles
And
I wouldn't mind
Mumps
'Cause
At least I'd have
Rashes
And
At least I'd have
Bumps.
But I hate
Tonsillitis
'Cause
There's nothing new
To see,—
When I take off
My under
Clothes
There's only
Just
Me.

Saturday Towels

Under the bed
Away upstairs,
I like to pretend
Is a den for bears.

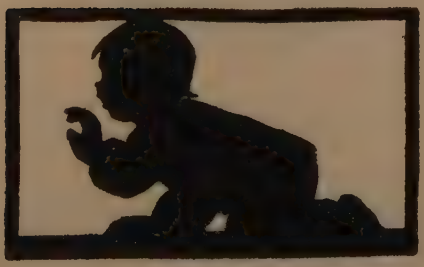
It's cool up there
When the yard is hot,
Sometimes it's dusty
And sometimes it's not.

So I lie very still
Hardly breathing at all
Till I hear black shoes
Coming down the hall,

Till Mary brings in
The Saturday towels.
Then I scramble out
With the awfullest yowls,

With the awfullest, awfullest
Sort of a roar,
And she drops the towels
And runs for the door.

Then I laugh and I laugh,
For, don't you see,
She thinks it's a bear,
But it's only Me!



D'You See?

I most usually wedge
Through a hole in the hedge
And I hide in the fields,
D'you see?
'Cause the goldenrod
Grows taller than God
And the grasses taller
Than me.
When I lie down flat
No one knows where I'm at
And Nurse is as scared as
Can be,

'Cause nobody knows
But the crickets and crows
Whatever's become
Of me.
D'you see?
And they wouldn't tell
Couldn't possibly tell
Why they wouldn't *think*
Of telling
On me.
* * *
D'you see?

GraceAnAnne

The little girls that live next door
Both are twins and both are four

And I try hard but never can
Tell which is Grace and which is Anne.

Now if I ever need just Grace
To help me build a cooking place

Or if I ever need just Anne
To help play "I'm the Doctor Man"

The only thing that I can do
When I need one is yell for two,

And that is how it all began
About my yelling—"GraceAnAnne!"

Lucky

At
Breakfast time
I heard them
Say
Our church
Burnt up
The other
Day
Our Church
Burnt up
In Jenkin
Town
My,
Wasn't it
Lucky
It didn't
Burn
Down!

White Shoes Boy

Monday mother went to town
And she brought me out some brown
  Two brown sneakers just for play
  Just to wear for every day.
Then, of course, old Mrs. Down
Always has to stop around,
  Or, of course, my Auntie May
  Just happens to pass our way.
If Auntie May and Mrs. Down
Would only go some place and drown
  Then Nursie wouldn't always say
  "Little White Shoes Boy today!"
Then, just for once, I'd wear my brown
And have a *decent* scruffle round.

Daddy Knows Best

Daddy says
I'm too old
For bibs
For my
Chin,
Says when he
Was my age
He kept
His food
In.

Daddy says
I'm too old
And he knows
Best,
But
Yesterday
Daddy spilled
Gravy
Down his
Vest.

Once Upon a Time

The words I like to hear the most
Are Once Upon A Time,
It doesn't matter what comes after
Once Upon A Time.

I don't care if it's just that silly
Fe, Fi, Fo, and Fum,
Or if it ends up scoldy—"Only
Babies suck their thumb!"

I don't care if it's just about
That big old father bear
And how he said, so growlly,
"Who's been sitting on my chair!"

The words I like to hear the most
Are Once Upon A Time.
It doesn't matter what comes after
Once Upon A Time.

And so I say it sort of slow
And sort of make it rhyme,
Just, Once-upona-once-upona
Once—upona—time!

Silly Mother

Mother told Isabel
My nose was too small,
Said I had hardly
Any nose at all.
Then she says "Baby,
Smell a pretty rose!"
Now how can I smell it
If I haven't any nose?

Saint Peter

Saint Peter, you and I
Ought to meet each other—
Having Peter for a name
Makes me sort of brother.

You have shiny, golden wings,
I have only feet,
But if we were racing,
Bet that I could beat!

You've a shiny, golden crown,
I have just a hat,
But if we counted freckles,
Bet I'd win at that!

You've a shiny, golden harp,
I have just a horn,
But you never heard such noise
Since you were born!

You are very, very old
And I am only young,
Just the same I bet that I have
Much the longest tongue.

Saint Peter, you and I
Ought to meet each other—
Having Peter for a name
Makes me sort of brother.

Who Do You Spoze?

I know
It's so
That Brownies butter
Every butter
Cup.

But who
Do you
Spoze it could be
That pumps the pumpkins
Up?

Three Things To Do

My Izzy puts me in my square
And goes away and leaves me there.

She knows because I'm in my pen
She needn't think of me again.

Now there are just three things to do
Get up or down or poke out through,

And when those three things all are done
There's no way left of having fun.

One day I threw my Piggy out
And broke the button off his snout,

So now they give me only toys
With soft insides that make a noise.

It isn't fair to go away
And leave a little boy to play

When there are just three things to do—
Get up or down or poke out through.

Much Rather

Policemen shoot Robbers
And
Firemen squirt out Fires
But I'd much rather be
The Man that changes Tires.

Hunters catch Elephants
And
Fishers catch Eels
But I'd rather just be
The Man that fixes Wheels.

Only Fooling

I fooled old Santa Claus all right
(But *please* don't let it out!)
'Cause I hung the rubber stocking up
That Grannie had for gout.

I hung it on the mantelpiece
And popped into bed,
And I pulled all the covers up
Way over my head.

And then on Christmas morning
Daddy made a funny roar—
'Cause the top was on the mantel
And the toe was on the floor!

But Santa never even noticed
Anything was queer
So don't you tell a single soul
And maybe—next year—

Peter Family Tree

Peter was a Rabbit,
And Peter was a Saint,
The sort of little boy
That never said Ain't!

Peter was a Pumpkin Eater
Couldn't keep his wife,
Did you ever hear so many
Peters in your life?

'Cause Peter was a Pan,
And Peter was a Great,
And how can I ever
Keep my Relatives straight!

Ship Ahoy!

I sent my ship to sea one day
And it sailed far and far away.

The wind came with a gusty roar
And big waves hurried it from shore.

I could see it still afloat
Like a tiny paper boat

Way out where the sun was red
Then I had to go to bed.

Every morning all through June
I climbed up upon the dune,

Every morning through July,
I looked out against the sky,

Then I used to whistle some
'Cause Nursie says that makes things come.

And then I even prayed a pray
'Cause often things come back *that* way.

But Mother says not to be sad
Because, when I'm a great big lad,

If I have been kind and good
And behaved as nice boys should,

That one fine morning I shall see
My little ship sail home to me.

It will sail out of the West
And filled with things I love the best—

Guns and shovels and a peck
Of gumdrops bulging out the deck!

So now I don't go any more
Walking tip-toe on the shore.

I do lots of things instead:—
Never grumble up to bed,

Kiss the company good-night,
Always tie my shoestrings tight,

Eat carrots and even squash,
Never hide under the wash,

Even let Nurse use the comb—
Until my little ship sails home!

The Sweeper Express

I sit on the sweeper
In breaker-man style
And I ride through the halls
For more than a mile.

I steer by the handle
That's wiggly and loose,
When I ride back to front
I'm on the caboose.

If I put my feet down
They catch on the track,
If I put them up high
I bump in the back.

When I call out the stations
As loud as I can
"All out here for Rydal!"
Then I'm the Brakeman.

So I ride through the halls
Like a King on a Mount.
(Of course Mary pushes
But that doesn't count.)

Showing Off

Mother says "Precious Boy
  Tell the girls your name!"
I say "Three years old,
  Thank you just the same."
Mother says "Count to ten."
  "Two and two is six."
Mother says "Hasn't he
  Just the dearest tricks!"

God

"Mother, tell me who is God
That makes the congregation nod
That never lets them sneeze or sigh,
Just cross-their-heart-and-hope-to-die.
And can we find God if we search
Or does he always stay in church?"

* * * * *

"My Baby, God is near to call,
And sometimes not in church at all,
(Especially if the doors are wide
And many shiny hats inside.)
God leaves the chants and flags unfurled
To guide the workings of His world:—
To stain the peach its rosy hue
And scatter diamonds on the dew,
To fill the rich veins of the earth
And blow the gentle winds to birth,
To wrap the young corn in the husk,
To close the curtains of the dusk,
To sow the seed, to swell the pod—
This, little son of mine, is God."

My Tapioca Table

There's a drawer in my table
And whenever I am able,

Whenever Nursie turns her back
I pull it open just a crack

To spit out crusts and gristly bits,
(And 'specially tapioca pits.)

If I should move to some place new
I'd have to take my table too,

Because I'll always need a drawer
For things that won't chew any more.

Learning Lessons

One and one is always two
And two and two is four
And if you add a whole lot
You get a whole lot more.

Why won't someone ask me
What I'd much rather say,
"How many shiny chicken eggs
Did Peter find today?"

Going to Gagie's

Please hurry and dress me
And hurry and say
That I'm going and going
To Gagie's today!

My Gagie can build
The best houses with chairs
And she knows a new way
Of hopping downstairs.

My Gagie can tell
Even Little Bo Peep
So it gives me the goosiest
Sort of a creep.

My Gagie gets scareder
Than Mother or Nurse
When I make monkeyfaces,
Or much, much worse.

So hurry and dress me
And hurry and say
That I'm going to Gagie's
Right Away!

Caterpillars

Once I went walking
Without any hat
And a tree sprinkled down
An old pillercat.

Just all of a sudden
It rolled in a ball,
And I tried but I couldn't
Unwind it at all.

Now pillercats sometimes
Are puffy and green,
And these slice up best
On the mower machine.

And pillercats sometimes
Are skinny and slow,
And these have to hump
Wherever they go.

Now this one was black
And had hairs like a brush,
And it made the most wonderful
Sort of a squush.

But I never did like
Silly old pillercats,
So I never go walking
Without any hats.

Shadow Moon

Wonder why God turns the sun
Way down low when day is done
Till it's just a shadow light
Like a bathroom burns at night.

Guess it must be 'cause he knows
I'm not one bit scared, just soze
I can squint one eye and see
That God is sitting up with me.

Painter Man

Nursie
Won't let me
Paint
Any more—
Can't paint the
Wall
And
Can't paint the
Floor.
Now
It may be
'Cause
I'm awfully
Young
But
It *might* be
'Cause
I paint
With my
Tongue.

Lapping

I'd like to be a pussy cat
Without a thing to do
Except to keep my eyes shut
And mew and mew and mew.

I'd like to curl up in the sun
And take a little nap,
But I'd like to be a pussy most
'Cause then I'd learn to lap.

Of course I couldn't lap a chop
Or anything that's canned
But wouldn't lapping junket up
Be absolutely grand!

Wish I Knew

Nurse is not allowed to smack
Not even if I sass her back,

And Nurse is not allowed to slap
Not if I never take a nap,

But Mother does let Nursie spank
If I have played an awful prank.

Once I just poked a parokeet
And got a spanking on my seat.

Then once I killed a little bug
And got the nicest, tightest hug.

Wish I could have a sort of list
Of what gets spanked and what gets kissed.

Run-Unders

The carpenter calls me "My little man,"
And rumples all up my hair.
Uncle Sewell calls me "Peter Punks,"
And throws me up in the air.
Of course Mother calls me "Precious Boy"
And "Dear," and the silliest things,
Now Pat only calls me "Hi, Kid!"
But he gives me run-under swings.

Excused

I think I saw God today
In a balloon
'Cause one flew over our house
Just about noon.

I ran out the front door
As fast as I could
'Cause I wanted to explain to God
I really was good.

I wanted to apologize
About last night—
I was so tired, I just couldn't
Say my prayers right.

I saw God lean way out
And wave his hand
And I *think* that he shouted,
"I understand!"

Traffic Coppers

The blue flags in the garden
Are policemen tall and straight
  That make the beetles "Stop on Red"
  And wave the ants to "Go Ahead,"
Down through the garden gate.

Sometimes when all the crawly bugs
Have stopped to lie in the sun
  Bubby and me line up our bikes
  Like regular drivers on regular pikes
And we wait till the traffic's begun.

Often we wait the longest time
For a wiggly worm to pass,
  Or to let a baby robin through
  That happens to be very new
At hopping on the grass.

The blue flags in the garden
Are policemen tall and straight,
  Sometimes they signal us "Run Slow"
  But mostly they signal us to "Go"
Down through the garden gate.

I'm Not Sick

I'm not sick!
  Only tired and hot,
  Most awfully hot
  But honest I'm not,
I promise I'm not a bit sick.

I'm not sick!
  Just sort of jarred,
  Guess I jumped too hard
  This morning in the yard
But it didn't make me a bit sick.

I'm not sick!
  Had a kind of fright,
  But Mummy, I'm all right,
  So don't hold me so tight
'Cause I'm not the leastest bit sick.

I'm not sick!
  Daddy come up near,
  Please don't look so queer
  I must have had a skeer
But you couldn't make ME a bit sick!

'Ning

You always
Have to
Say
"Good Morning"
To Aunts
Especially
If they bring you
Suits with
Pants
But the
Rest of the time
To all but
A few
I mostly
Find that
" 'Ning"
Will do.

What I Heard

I heard Daddy telling Mother
She should spank me much, much more,
Not a little paddy-whacking
But a smacking that was sore.
I heard Mother telling Daddy
He should spank me if he could,
I was rather like my father
So it wouldn't do much good.

Just for Jesus

Peter's Own Prayer

Jesus, I kneel down to say
Thank you for another day,

For hands to feel and eyes to see
And all your loving gifts to me.

Teach me in your words to talk
Help me in your ways to walk,

Guide and bless me from above,
Jesus, it is you I love!